

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2013 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 31

Fall Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The projected 2013 fall chum salmon run size based on inseason assessment ranges between 900,000 and 1,000,000 fish. Six pulses of fall chum salmon have entered Yukon River. The fifth and largest pulse entered Yukon River over five days (August 16 through August 20) and was estimated to be over 250,000 in size. Since then, fall chum salmon catches at the Lower Yukon River test fisheries have been steady and a small group of fall chum salmon is currently passing Pilot Station sonar.

Coho salmon have entered Yukon River in low numbers and passage past Pilot Station sonar has remained below average the entire season, however run timing could be late. Coho salmon run past Pilot Station sonar reached the historical mid-point on August 22 and is currently tracking to be the second lowest passage on record. The projected coho salmon run size based on inseason assessment ranges between 133,000 and 180,000 fish.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing – YDFDA, ADF&G

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 25 was 2,386.21, which is above the historical median of 1,154.27 for that date. The cumulative CPUE through August 25 for coho salmon was 270.65, which is below the historical median of 314.95 for that date. ADF&G will cease conducting the test fish drifts after August 28 at which time YDFDA will continue the project through September 20.

Pilot Station Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 25 is approximately 623,000 fish, which is above the median passage of 477,700 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through August 25 is approximately 51,700 fish, which is below the median passage of 93,500 fish for that date.

Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project - Zuray

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE through August 25 is approximately 5,900 fish, which is below the historical median of 10,200 fish for that date. The cumulative based on the adjusted water level is also below the historical median for that date.

Chandalar Sonar Project - USFWS

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon through August 25 is approximately 24,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 18,000 fish for that date.

Eagle Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon from August 19 through August 25 is 1,300 fish, which is slightly below average of 1,500 fish for that date.

Manley Test Fish Wheel-ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE through August 25 is approximately 855 fish, which is near the historical average of 875 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE through August 25 is approximately 13 fish, which is near the historical average of 10 fish for that date.

Age Composition

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 23 was 64.6% age-4, 34.1% age-5, and 1.1% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 66.1% for this date and average age-5 fish 31.7%. Females contributed 57.4% to the samples, which is near the average of 57.3%. The sample size was 1,063 fish for ages and 1,111 for gender.

The combined fall chum salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 22) was 66.8% age-4 and 32.4% age-5. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 47.4%. The sample size was 742 fish for ages and 760 for gender.

The coho salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 23 was 18.1% age-3, 73.5% age-4, and 8.4% age-5 fish. The respective averages are 15.3% age-3, 76.7% age-4, and 4.8% age-5 fish for this date. Females contributed 39.7% to the samples, which is below the average of 44.1%. The sample size was 253 fish for ages and 269 for gender.

The combined coho salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 22) was 5.5% age-3, 35.4% age-4 and 3.5% age-5. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 18.3%. The sample size was 339 for ages and 350 for gender.

Stock Composition

Fall chum salmon genetic samples obtained from the Pilot Station sonar test fish program between August 7 and August 16 indicated that stocks represent approximately 31%, 25%, and 40% for Tanana, Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), and Canada respectively. Summer chum salmon made up approximately 4% of the fish sampled during that time period.

Fall Season Management

In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 900,000 to 1,000,000 fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is now on the full regulatory schedules in the Yukon River drainage (see subsistence schedule below).

The fall chum salmon commercial fishing season in Districts 1 and 2 closes by regulation after August 31. Additional commercial openings for the remainder of the season will be announced.

A coho salmon directed commercial fishery can be prosecuted in Districts 1 and 2 through September 10 if inseason run assessment indicates there is a surplus available for harvest. At this time the coho salmon run appears to be well below average with passage past Pilot Station tracking to be the second lowest on record. Assessment of the coho salmon run is ongoing and the department will consider providing coho salmon directed commercial openings in Districts 1 and 2 if warranted.

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 25, ten fall commercial fishing periods have been announced in District Y-1 and nine periods in District Y-2. Three commercial periods have been scheduled in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. Four commercial fishing periods have been scheduled in District 6.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-1:

Period #10: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 6 hours (4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. August 26), remainder of District Y-1, 6 hours (1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. August 26). Currently there is no harvest to report.

The cumulative harvest for Y-1 through August 25 is 100,886 fall chum and 20,659 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 14 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-2:

Period #9: District Y-2, 4 hours (4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. August 25). Preliminary verbals indicate a harvest of 8,769 fall chum salmon and 3,829 coho salmon.

The cumulative harvest for Y-2 through August 25 is 97,791 fall chum and 23,223 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 29 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C:

Period #3: Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, 5-day period (6:00 p.m. Tuesday August 27 until 6:00 p.m. September 1). Currently there is no harvest to report.

The cumulative harvest for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C through August 25 is 1,041 fall chum salmon.

Preliminary harvest information for District 6:

Preliminary harvest from the August 23 through August 25 opening (and the cumulative harvest for the fall season) was 439 fall chum and 1 coho.

Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate in any of the districts and subdistricts to request an opening by contacting the Fairbanks office at (907) 459-7274.

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

For the current subsistence schedule please call **(toll free): 1-866-479-7387 or in Fairbanks call (907) 459-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: The Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

In District 4, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Tanana, Rampart and the Haul Road Bridge area. Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C are open 5 days per week for subsistence salmon fishing. The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream on the Yukon River to U.S./Canada Border and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and all salmon may be kept when caught in fish wheels.

Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 pm Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 pm Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

Old Minto Area (upstream of Tolovana River mouth to upstream of Totchaket Slough see regulations for area): This area includes the community of Old Minto. Subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one five day fishing period per week from 6:00pm Fridays until 6:00pm Wednesdays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 6-C (from regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Personal Use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C is open from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays. Fisherman may use a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or in Fairbanks at 459-7274. The Emmonak ADFG office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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